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ABSTRACT

Central Michigan University was the first single campus, 4-year institution of higher education in the United States to enter into a collective bargaining agreement with its faculty. This first agreement in 1969 was followed by a multiyear contract for the year 1971-74 which represented the first instance of a second successful contract in a 4-year institution of higher education. This paper deals with some of the basic demands imposed upon institutional research at Central Michigan University during these bargaining periods and the responses made to these demands. Special emphasis is given to anticipating demands and generating the data necessary to meet those demands. (Author)

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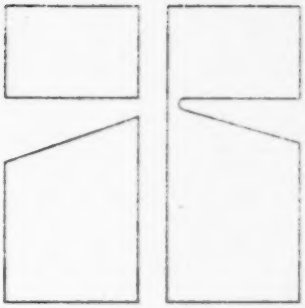

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ABSTRACT OF PAPER

Title: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING: ITS IMPACT FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

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COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

ITS IMPACT FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

In good academic fashion, let me begin by identifying what is generally referred to as my credentials. The university I serve is unionized and has been for the past three years. I cannot dogmatically state that we have done our collective bargaining well during this three year period but if the existence of a contract is any indication of success, then we have indeed been successful in our collective bargaining. Nevertheless, it may be instructive for me to discuss our experiences with you and to speculate from this experience for the future.

Central Michigan University has been referred to as an emerging university. It has a relatively stable enrollment of 15,000 students, a faculty of approximately 700 and a general fund operating budget of $26 million. While we have four organized employee groups, my comments are limited to the consequences of the unionization of the faculty. In 1969, Central Michigan University became the first single campus, four-year institution of higher education in the United States to enter into a collective bargaining agreement with its faculty. At the time of this agreement, the only existing collective bargaining agreement in any United States institution of higher education was the agreement covering the various junior colleges and senior colleges making up the City University of New York. A second agreement, this one for the three-year period from 1971-74, was reached upon the termination of the first contract which covered the academic year 1970-71. This second agreement represented the first multi-year contract at a single campus, four-year institution of higher education in the United States. It also represented the first instance of a second successful contract in a four-year institution of higher education.

Successful collective bargaining proceeds in three distinct phases:

Phase I - Organization Drive
The selection of a bargaining agent to represent the faculty in the negotiations.

Phase II - Actual Election and Negotiations
The election by the faculty of their bargaining agent and the period of actual negotiations.

Phase III - Contract Administration
The administration of the negotiated contract for the agreement period.

This paper will concentrate on some of the basic demands imposed on institutional research at Central Michigan University as the collective

bargaining process proceeding through Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III. Obviously, some demands were unique to Central Michigan University and will not be discussed here. Other demands were more general and applicable to any institution and are the object of discussion in this paper.

Since Phase I will take different forms at different institutions - that is, different groups will be attempting to organize the faculty along various lines - it is difficult to isolate demands that are general in nature. The most advantageous endeavor that institutional research can undertake at this time is to take stock of the data and information that is presently available and to anticipate what might be needed once negotiations get underway. For example, the university administration anticipated that a type of retirement bonus would be sought by the faculty. Institutional research surveyed the existing data and discovered that even though data on the age and years of service of each faculty member was available, there had been no projection as to the number of individuals expected to retire during any year. Without this information a retirement bonus could not be costed. Consequently, institutional research undertook an analysis and projection of expected retirements during each of the following three years.

After the actual bargaining agent for the faculty has been elected and the stage is set for negotiations (Phase II), both units demand basic information. Both units are involved in preparing their first proposals and potential counter-proposals. Accurate information about the institution is needed by both units at this time so that proposals are formulated upon fact and not upon fancy. One extremely important area where accurate and detailed information is needed is the whole area referred to as the "faculty."

Information on the faculty encompasses more than just the usual basic information - name, degree, rank and salary. Both units need information on such factors as years of experience both at the institution and elsewhere, date of last promotion, years in present rank, tenure status, number and scope of publications and research projects, teaching hour load, student credit hour load, committee responsibilities, merit awards, potential year of retirement and fringe benefit status.

To meet this need at Central Michigan University, the Office of Institutional Research implemented a "faculty billet control system" which is a computer based faculty information file having a potential for 143 fields of information on each faculty member (regular, temporary, graduate assistant). This system serves as the centralized information file on the faculty and is updated weekly with the appropriate individual data. Such a system enables the institution to maintain an accurate and comprehensive information system on the faculty. During the negotiation period, the system provides an excellent data base for the analyzing and testing of contract proposals as they are formulated and presented by each bargaining team. Without such a system, much of the preciseness needed during Phase II is lost. The teams then only talk in terms of "We think. . . " or "It is our opinion that. . . . " Nothing hinders successful collective bargaining more than that type of talking.

Some uses of the system at Central Michigan University during the negotiated period were a costing of possible fringe benefit packages, a costing of an early retirement proposal and a projection of the tenure status of the faculty. To be more specific, the faculty negotiating team brought a particular life insurance proposal to the bargaining table.

In order to evaluate and "cost-out" the proposal, the number of faculty in each major salary block ($5,000-$10,000; $10,000-$15,000; $15,000-$20,000; $20,000-$25,000) according to sex and birthdate was needed for the current year and projected for each year of the contract period. This information was necessary since insurance companies establish differing premium rates depending on female/male ratios and average age within salary blocks. With the billet-control system providing the base data for each individual, computer programs were written to present the data in the desired form.

Another explicit use of the system was in the analysis of proposed tenure systems. Since job security is a predictable and understandable goal of a faculty bargaining unit, a tenure system proposal should be expected as part of the contract proposal. In order to evaluate such tenure systems, tenure projections had to be made. Such projections involved the data on years of service at the institution, time spent in rank, and historical retention rates. The faculty billet-control system provided the baseline data needed for the analysis.

The third phase of collective bargaining - Contract Administration - is that phase of collective bargaining which is concerned with the administration of the actual ratified contract. This phase of collective bargaining places demands on institutional research which are new to most operations. Institutional resarch is expected to gather and classify all grievances, questions, and other institutional contract decisions for easy availability to bi-parti committees. As the number of institutions with contract agreements increases in the future, the demand for information on their contracts and interpretations of these contracts will grow. Institutional research can expect to share much of this burden along with a university attorney if available.

Many questions have been directed to the university administration concerning the success of collective bargaining at Central Michigan Univsity. The consensus of the administration is that success is the direct product of planning and preparation. Preparation means investigating all possible proposals before these proposals come to the bargaining table. The bargaining teams must know as much about policies, costs, and political ramifications so that nothing surprises them. Every possible issue must be identified and then a continuum developed from the "best of all worlds" to the "worst of all worlds." Thus the team can identify the limits within which they can potentially agree.

Institutional Research must be involved from the beginning (Phase I) if good planning and preparation are to take place. Institutional Research must be involved during negotiations (Phase II) if sound contract decisions are going to be made. Institutional Research must be involved during the contract period (Phase III) if successful administration of the contract is to take place. In summary, Institutional Research must be prepared to be deeply involved in the entire collective bargaining process.

Raymond N. Kieft

April 10, 1973